



CODSALL & BILBROOK HISTORY SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER No 83

JANUARY 2024

From Olympia via Much Wenlock to the World

A talk by David Tordoff

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 7.45pm Codsall Village Hall

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Dear Members

Every time you look at the adverts on TV someone is appealing for money. This is not an appeal for money, but it *is* an appeal for volunteers. The History Society has reached a watershed. Several members of the Committee are standing down at the end of this year, so will the Society continue to thrive and be a tremendous resource for the village or will it finish at the end of this Programme in May?

Our most pressing need of a volunteer to take on the role of Programme Secretary has been solved. Sylvia Jenkins, with tremendous support from Stephen, has agreed to take it on. Stephen has completed the ten years he agreed to work on committee and we would like to record our thanks for the competent and dedicated way he has produced our entertaining list of speakers every year.

Our next priority is for a new Membership Secretary. Margaret took on this role at the very beginning and having fulfilled the position faultlessly for twenty-five years she would like to stand down and pass the books over to someone else. So, that leaves Fred, our ex-Treasurer, Peter our present Treasurer, Gill and myself, but only for one more year.

We have plenty of money, an impressive list of possible speakers, a large membership (currently 130 plus), an excellent venue with good parking, a comprehensive list of publications, (accessible through the website or Library) and an impressive website. All we need are a few people with a couple of hours to spare each month to come forward.

Besides my enthusiasm for local history I have always wanted to give something back to the area which has given so much to me. Anyone who would like to know more is welcome to have a chat with me or any other member of the committee.

Judy Davies



*The Birches pre-1910*

An email from Birches School about the history of the local area made me realise that many people in Codsall do not know where the name Birches Road came from. The answer is this substantial house in the picture above.

We know that the estate was in existence in 1716 when Richard Stubbs was living there. When Richard died the property was left to his son, Samuel, who died only four years later whence the estate passed to his son John. On his death in 1806 it was his nephew Thomas Bedford, a Wolverhampton liquor merchant who inherited the property and his son Thomas Stubbs Bedford after him. In 1872 the estate passed to William Fleeming Fryer, an iron master of Wergs Hall, Tettenhall; becoming part of the Wergs Hall estate until the house and its 225 acres were sold.

In 1901 Frank Gaskell rented the property. Part of its attraction would have been that it allowed easy access to the train service to both Birmingham and Liverpool. Frank's father had acquired the Liverpool Post and Echo newspaper so this would have been an important attribute.

These were Edwardian times and a large house required staffing. There were four indoor servants, as well as a coachman, a groom and gardeners. The 'shopping' was done by horse and carriage to Goodalls in Chapel Ash, where Mr Goodall would come outside to receive the order for his goods. In 1909 Mr Gaskell bought Pendrell Hall and moved to Codsall Wood.

Later on the house was split into two, becoming Birches Court and Charters Hall until it was sold in the 1960s, demolished and private houses were built on the site.